

Message Text

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PAGE 01 COPENH 02501 290817Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CU-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 DHA-02 IO-13 /075 W
-----292022Z 045891 /75

R 281650Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4368
INFO USMISSION NATO
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

C O N F I D E N T I A L COPENHAGEN 2501

E.O.: 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, CSCE, UR, DA
SUBJ: SOVIET OFFICIAL VISITS DENMARK TO DISCUSS BELGRADE

REFS: (A) COPENHAGEN 2197, (B) MOSCOW 5197, (C) STOCKHOLM 1682

SUMMARY. SOVIET PRESENTATION TO DANES ON BELGRADE FOLLOWED EXPECTED LINES WITH EMPHASIS ON "POLITICAL CONCEPT" AND DE-EMPHASIS ON BASKET III. DANES UNDERSTAND THAT ALTHOUGH SOVIETS CLEARLY WANT TO AVOID A CONFRONTATION OVER HUMAN RIGHTS, THEY ARE READY WITH THEIR OWN SUPPLY OF MUD AND WILL START SLINGING IT IF THE WEST PUSHES TOO HARD. END SUMMARY.

1. ON APRIL 27 AMBASSADOR RECEIVED A READOUT ON SOVIET-DANISH BELGRADE DISCUSSIONS FROM DANISH AMBASSADOR TO PRAGUE SJOLD GUSTAV MELLBIN. MELLBIN, WHO IS HOME ON CONSULTATIONS, WILL LEAD THE DANISH DELEGATION TO BELGRADE.

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2. BEFORE GOING TO THE SUBSTANCE OF THE DISCUSSION, MELLBIN WRYLY OBSERVED THAT THERE ARE TWO "KOVALEVS." THE ONE WHO CAME TO COPENHAGEN WAS NOT THE DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER A. G. KOVALEV, BUT WAS ANDREI YEFIMOVICH KOVALEV, A FORMER SOVIET AMBASSADOR TO FINLAND WHOM THE SOVIETS NOW DESCRIBE AS "SENIOR COUNSELLOR" IN THE FOREIGN MINISTRY'S "ADMINISTRATION FOR FOREIGN POLICY PLANNING." MELLBIN SAID THAT THIS KAVALEV DESCRIBED HIMSELF AS HAVING

BEEN INVOLVED IN CSCE AFFAIRS FOR SOME TIME FROM THE "MOSCOW END." HE WAS, MELLBIN SAID, WELL INFORMED AND HAD DONE HIS HOMEWORK.

3. THE MEETING WITH DANISH FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS LASTED ABOUT TWO AND A HALF HOURS. THE MAIN MESSAGE THAT KOVALEV HAD TO DELIVER WAS THE SOVIET VIEW THAT DISCUSSIONS AT BELGRADE SHOULD PROCEED FROM A "POLITICAL CONCEPT" OF THE CONFERENCE. KOVALEV SAID THAT ALTHOUGH THIS WAS NOT ORIGINALLY A SOVIET IDEA, IT WAS A GOOD ONE. THE ADOPTION OF THIS CONCEPT BY THE PREPARATORY CONFERENCE IS OF GREAT SIGNIFICANCE ACCORDING TO KOVALEV.

4. MELLBIN SAID THAT WHEN ASKED WHAT EXACTLY THE SOVIET UNION'S "POLITICAL CONCEPT" WAS, KOVALEV WAS NOT PRECISE. HE DID NOT GO BEYOND SAYING THAT THE BELGRADE CONFERENCE MUST "SERVE DETENTE" AND THAT IT MUST BE A "CONSTRUCTIVE AND POSITIVE" MEETING.

5. MELLBIN CONTINUED THAT THE DANES TOLD KOVALEV THAT THEY WERE NOT SURE OF WHAT THE IDEA REALLY MEANT AND WERE NOT IN ANY CASE PREPARED TO PUT IT DOWN ON A PIECE OF PAPER AT THE PRELIMINARY CONFERENCE IN JUNE. SUCH A MEETING SHOULD BE A STRICTLY TECHNICAL ONE AND SHOULD AVOID SUBSTANTIVE POLITICAL DISCUSSIONS.

6. IN KOVALEV'S VIEW THE MAIN PURPOSE OF BELGRADE IS TO PROMOTE THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF DETENT AND EAST-WEST COOPERATION. THE PARTICIPANTS ARE ALL SOVERIEGN STATES AND THERE SHOULD BE NO QUESTION OF ANY ONE OF THEM BEING "CALLED TO ACCOUNT." NATURALLY, HOWEVER, THE GOVERNMENTS OF THESE STATES SHOULD BE IN A POSITION TO DESCRIBE WHAT HAD BEEN ACCOMPLISHED SINCE THE SIGNING OF THE HELSINKI FINAL ACT. BUT THERE SHOULD BE NO THOUGHT GIVEN TO DE-CONFIDENTIAL

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VOTING AN UNDUE AMOUNT OF TIME AT BELGRADE TO DISCUSSIONS ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND BASKET III. KOVALEV STRESSED THAT POLEMICS MUST BE AVOIDED AT ALL COSTS.

7. IN RESPONSE, THE DANES EXPRESSED THEIR AGREEMENT ON THE DESIRABILITY OF AVOIDING POLEMICS AND A SHARP CONFRONTATION IT WAS OBVIOUS, HOWEVER, THAT ALL ELEMENTS OF THE FINAL ACT MUST BE DISCUSSED AT BELGRADE. THE TONE OF THE DISCUSSION AT BELGRADE, SAID THE DANES, SHOULD BE "HOW BETTER" TO IMPLEMENT THE FINAL ACT. THE DANES AGREED WITH THE SOVIETS THAT IMMEDIATE IMPLEMENTATION OF ALL ELEMENTS OF THE ACT WAS IMPOSSIBLE.

8. IN FURTHER DISCUSSION OF IMPLEMENTATION, KOVALEV TALKED ABOUT THE "REALITIES" OF THE SOVIET SITUATION. THE DANES REPLIED THAT THEY HAVE THEIR OWN "REALITIES" TO DEAL WITH, SPECIFICALLY PUBLIC OPINION.

9. MELLBIN SAID THAT PART OF KOVALEV'S BRIEF WAS OBVIOUSLY ALSO MAKE THE FOLLOWING POINT. KOVALEV SAID THAT "CERTAIN WESTERN CIRCLES" -- MELLBIN BELIEVED THAT HE WAS REFERRING PRIMARILY TO

WESTERN MEDIA -- HIGHLY TOUT THE "CONVERGENCE" IDEA: THAT IS, THAT OVER TIME THE SOVIET SYSTEM WILL END UP RESEMBLING THAT OF THE WEST. KOVALEV SAID THAT THIS SIMPLY WILL NOT HAPPEN.

10. MELLBIN SAID THAT AFTER BELGRADE IS OVER, THE SOVIETS NOT ONLY WANT THE DETENTE PROCESS TO CONTINUE BUT THEY MAY MAKE SOME NEW PROPOSALS AS ENVISAGED IN THE FINAL ACT ITSELF. THESE COULD INCLUDE THE SWISS IDEA OF PEACEFUL SETTLEMENTS OF DISPUTES AS WELL AS "GERMAN PROPOSAL" OF A "SCIENTIFIC FORUM." MELLBIN SAID THAT THE DANES GOT THE IMPRESSION THAT THE SOVIETS MIGHT ALSO TRY TO TIE IN THE THREE BREZHNEV PROPOSALS TO THE BELGRADE FINAL COMMUNIQUE. IN THE DANES' VIEW, THE BREZHNEV GAMBIT DEPENDS ON THE OUTLOOK OF THE CURRENT ECE MEETING NOW IN SESSION.

11. THE DANES REITERATED TO KOVALEV THEIR POSITION ON POST-BELGRADE MEETINGS: BELGRADE SHOULD DO NO MORE THAN DECIDE WHETHER A SINGLE SUBSEQUENT MEETING WOULD BE DESIRABLE. IF SUCH A CONFERENCE WERE CONFIDENTIAL

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TO TAKE PLACE, THAN THAT CONFERENCE SHOULD ITSELF DECIDE ON ANY FUTURE MEETING.

12. MELLBIN SAID THAT KOVALEV DID NOT REACT TO THIS STATEMENT ONE WAY OR THE OTHER. NOR DID HE REACT TO THE DANES EXPRESSED PREFERENCE TO ESTABLISH A COMMITTEE STRUCTURE AT THE ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING BEGINNING IN JUNE.

13. IN COMMENTING ON THE SOVIET-DANISH DISCUSSIONS, AMBASSADOR MELLBIN SAID THAT THE SUBSTANCE OF KOVALEV'S PRESENTATION WAS LARGELY WHAT THE DANES EXPECTED, PARTICULARLY THE IDEA OF A "POLITICAL CONCEPT" FRAMEWORK FOR BELGRADE. MELLBIN SAID THAT THE DANES MIGHT SUGGEST THAT THE WEST DEAL WITH THE "POLITICAL CONCEPT" QUESTION IN THE CONTEXT OF AGENDA DISCUSSIONS AT THE PREPARATORY CONFERENCE. SUCH DISCUSSIONS ARE IN ANY CASE OBVIOUSLY CIRCUMSCRIBED BY THE FINAL ACT ITSELF.

14. IT WAS OBVIOUS FROM KOVALEV'S PRESENTATION, MELLBIN SAID, THAT THE SOVIETS DID NOT WANT A LONG MEETING BUT KOVALEV REALLY DID NOT EMPHASIZE THIS IN HIS DISCUSSION WITH THE DANES.

15. FINALLY, AMBASSADOR MELLBIN OBSERVED THAT HE AND HIS DANISH COLLEAGUES CAME AWAY FROM THE MEETING WITH KOVALEV WITH THE STRONG IMPRESSION THAT THE SOVIETS EXPECTEDLY WANT TO AVOID MUD SLINGING BUT IF THE WEST IS "TOO HARD" ON THE SOVIETS, THE LATTER HAVE THEIR "OWN SUPPLY OF MUD" AND ARE PREPARED TO TOSS IT WITH GREAT FORCE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, POLICIES, HUMAN RIGHTS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, COLLECTIVE SECURITY AGREEMENTS
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Copy: SINGLE
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Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977COPENH02501
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770150-0983
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From: COPENHAGEN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770411/aaaaainr.tel
Line Count: 166
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Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 COPENHAGEN 2197, 77 MOSCOW 5197, 77 STOCKHOLM 1682
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 14-Jan-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2670324
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SOVIET OFFICIAL VISITS DENMARK TO DISCUSS BELGRADE
TAGS: PFOR, OVIP, UR, DA, CSCE, (MELLBIN, SJOLD GUSTAV), (KOVALEV, ANDREI YEFIMOVICH)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/2c2c3e9c-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009